

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2050

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 BONN 16032

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: 1976 BUNDESTAG ELECTION: TEN DAYS TO GO

REFS: A. BONN 15643 (NOTAL); B. BONN 15238 (NOTAL);

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BEGIN SUMMARY: BOTH SIDES IN THE 1976 BUNDESTAG ELECTION CLAIM THEY ARE GOING TO WIN AND DEPENDING ON WHICH POLL YOU READ EITHER SIDE COULD BE RIGHT. EVEN IF THE SPD/FDP COALITION EMERGES FROM THE OCTOBER 3 ELECTION WITH A MAJORITY, IT APPEARS THAT THE CDU/CSU WILL MAKE MAJOR INROADS ON OCTOBER 3. THE ADVANTAGES OF INCUMBENCY AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE GERMAN ELECTION SYSTEM WHICH MAKES IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR A SINGLE PARTY TO OBTAIN AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY HAVE NOT PREVENTED THE OPPOSITION FROM MAKING THE BUNDESTAG ELECTION A VERY CLOSE CONTEST. AMONG THE REASONS FOR THE OPPOSITION'S SUCCESS HAVE BEEN THE AGGRESSIVE AND SKILLFUL CDU/CSU CAMPAIGN ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE SLOW-STARTING, SOMEWHAT LACKLUSTER PERFORMANCE OF THE SPD ON THE OTHER. THE OPPOSITION'S OPTIMISM IS BASED PARTIALLY ON THE VOTING TREND OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS WHICH HAS BEEN IN FAVOR OF THE UNION PARTIES. END SUMMARY.

1. WHILE IT IS NOT UNUSUAL FOR POLITICAL CANDIDATES TO CLAIM THAT THEY ARE GOING TO WIN EVEN WHEN THEIR CHANCES ARE NIL, IN THE CASE OF THE 1976 WEST GERMAN BUNDESTAG ELECTION EITHER SIDE COULD BE RIGHT. CDU/CSU CANDIDATE KOHL CLAIMS THAT THE UNION PARTIES WILL RECEIVE OVER FIFTY PERCENT OF THE VOTE AND CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT PREDICTS THAT THE COALITION WILL EMERGE WITH A MAJORITY OF 10 TO 16 SEATS. BOTH SIDES CITE PUBLIC OPINION POLLS TO SUPPORT THEIR CLAIMS.

2. ONLY A FEW MONTHS AGO, IT WAS GENERALLY BELIEVED THAT ALTHOUGH THE COALITION MIGHT LOSE SOME SEATS, THE SOCIAL/LIBERAL GOVERNMENT WAS ALMOST CERTAIN TO REMAIN IN POWER BECAUSE IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT UNDER THE GERMAN ELECTION SYSTEM FOR A SINGLE PARTY TO OBTAIN AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY (IT HAS HAPPENED ONLY ONCE IN THE HISTORY OF THE FRG). IN ADDITION, THE SPD HAD ALL THE ADVANTAGES OF INCUMBENCY AND ENTERED THE CONTEST LED BY A POPULAR CHANCELLOR. WHATEVER THE OUTCOME ON OCTOBER 3, IT IS CLEAR THAT THESE TWO FACTORS HAVE NOT PREVENTED THE OPPOSITION FROM TURNING THE ELECTION INTO A REAL CONTEST.

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3. THERE IS NO END TO CLAIMANTS IN THE CDU WHO TAKE CREDIT FOR THE PARTY'S STRONG SHOWING TO DATE. IN REALITY, MOST OF THE CREDIT SHOULD GO TO THE CHANCELLOR-CANDIDATE HIMSELF, HELMUT KOHL, AND TO THE PARTY'S CHIEF STRATEGIST, KURT BIEDENKOPF. THEY MAPPED OUT A LONG-TERM PLAN, FIRST TO WIN THE NOMINATION AND THEN TO DEVELOP A CAMPAIGN BUILT AROUND KOHL. BIEDENKOPF LED

KOHL THROUGH A POLITICAL MINEFIELD TO OBTAIN THE UNION PARTIES NOMINATION AS CHANCELLOR-CANDIDATE OVER THE OPPOSITION OF FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS AND OTHER RIVALS SUCH AS SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN'S MINISTER-PRESIDENT STOLTENBERG.

4. KOHL BEGAN ELECTIONEERING AS SOON AS HE RECEIVED THE NOMINATION AND EVEN MADE GOOD USE OF HIS VACATION TIME IN AUSTRIA TO ISSUE A BARRAGE OF PRESS STATEMENTS, TO GIVE INTERVIEWS AND TO COURT VOTES AMONG GERMAN VACATIONERS THERE. ONCE HE RETURNED TO GERMANY AT THE END OF AUGUST, HE CARRIED HIS "WAHLKAMPF" UNTIRINGLY TO EVERY CORNER OF THE FEDERAL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 05 BONN 16032

REPUBLIC (E.G., OVER 140 APPEARANCES). UNLIKE 1972,  
ALL PROMINENT CDU AND CSU POLITICIANS ARE ENGAGED  
ACTIVELY IN THE CAMPAIGN. ACCORDING TO OLD-TIMERS IN  
THE CDU, THE RANK-AND-FILE IS MORE ENTHUSIASTIC THAN  
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AT ANY TIME SINCE THE DAYS OF ADENAUER.

5. THIS ENTHUSIASM IS DUE LARGELY TO KOHL. FOR  
REASONS THAT ARE DIFFICULT EVEN FOR HIS OWN SUPPORTERS  
TO UNDERSTAND, KOHL DRAWS AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE FROM  
CROWDS. ONE OF HIS STAFF MEN HAS TOLD US, WITH AN  
EXPRESSION OF DELIGHTED SURPRISE, THAT WHENEVER KOHL  
MINGLES WITH CROWDS AFTER HIS SPEECHES ALL THE BUTTONS  
ON HIS JACKET ARE TORN OFF BY ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORTERS  
WANTING A SOUVENIR OF THE OCCASION. HIS AUDIENCES  
SHOUT "HELMUT, HELMUT" IN A WAY THAT SCHMIDT'S AUDI-  
ENCES DO NOT, EVEN THOUGH EVERY OBJECTIVE OBSERVER  
BELIEVES THAT SCHMIDT IS THE BETTER CAMPAIGNER.

6. AN EXAMPLE OF HOW THE CDU HAS TAKEN THE INITIATIVE  
IS THE UNION PARTIES' CAMPAIGN IN THE RUHR. BIEDENKOPF,  
WHO HEADS THE CDU TICKET IN NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA,  
TOOK THE DARING STEP OF CHALLENGING THE TRADE UNIONS  
AND AS A RESULT HAS MADE HIMSELF A POLITICAL NAME IN  
AN AREA WHERE ONLY A FEW MONTHS AGO HE WAS UNKNOWN.  
HIS PARTY WORKERS IN THIS SPD STRONGHOLD PREEMPTED THE  
BEST LOCATIONS FOR THEIR ELECTION POSTERS BEFORE THE  
SPD EVEN GOT STARTED. WHILE BIEDENKOPF IS NOT EXPECTED  
TO BREAK THE SPD MAJORITY IN THE RUHR, HE IS EXPECTED  
TO IMPROVE THE SHOWING OF THE CDU WHICH IN 1972  
RECEIVED 37 PER CENT OF THE VOTE.

7. WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT IN BIEDENKOPF'S CAMPAIGN,  
AND HAS BEEN CHARACTERISTIC OF THE UNION CAMPAIGN, IS  
THE CAPACITY TO GAIN THE TACTICAL INITIATIVE. HE HAS  
PUT THE OPPOSITION ON THE DEFENSIVE AND FORCED THEM TO  
JUSTIFY PRACTICES THAT HAD COME TO BE SO WELL  
ESTABLISHED THAT THEY WERE NOT QUESTIONED EVEN BY THE

OPPOSITION. HE HAS RUN THE CONSIDERABLE RISK OF ENFLAMING THE ORGANIZED WORKERS' MOVEMENT AGAINST HIM, BUT IN THE MEANTIME HAS ATTRACTED ATTENTION AND DARED TO TAKE THE CDU INTO AREAS THAT IT HAD VIRTUALLY ABANDONED IN THE PAST. WHEREAS, IN THE 1972 CAMPAIGN, IT WAS THE SPD/FDP COALITION THAT WAS ON THE ATTACK AGAINST A DEMORALIZED CDU/CSU OPPOSITION, IT IS NOW THE UNION PARTIES THAT ARE ON THE ATTACK.  
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8. ONE IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LAUNCHING THE UNION PARTIES ON AN AGGRESSIVE CAMPAIGN IS THAT EVER SINCE THE 1972 BUNDESTAG ELECTION, THE VOTING TREND HAS BEEN IN FAVOR OF THE CHRISTIAN PARTIES. IN ALMOST ALL OF THE LAENDER ELECTIONS THE UNION PARTIES ACHIEVED IMPRESSIVE ELECTION VICTORIES. STUNNING ELECTORAL SUCCESSES IN BAVARIA, HESSE, RHINELAND-PALATINATE, AND BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG BOLSTERED THE MORALE OF THE OPPOSITION, AND IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WERE ABLE TO UNSEAT THE SPD/FDP GOVERNMENT IN LOWER SAXONY. KOHL HAS BUILT UPON THIS WAVE OF OPTIMISM IN HIS CAMPAIGN.

9. DESPITE ALL THESE TACTICAL SUCCESSES, HOWEVER, THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR WORKING FOR THE CDU/CSU MAY WELL BE HISTORICAL AND FUNDAMENTAL TO THE POLITICS OF GERMANY: GERMANY, INCLUDING MANY OF THOSE PARTS THAT ARE NOW IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC, HAS BEEN AND REMAINS AN ESSENTIALLY CONSERVATIVE COUNTRY. UNLESS THE PEOPLE ARE AROUSED BY SOME GREAT ISSUE, THEY TEND TO VOTE CONSERVATIVE. THE GREAT ISSUES THAT THE SPD HAD IN 1972 ARE NO LONGER AT HAND. IT HAS ACHIEVED A GREAT DEAL, BUT IN A CURIOUS WAY NOW APPEARS TO BE FIGHTING A REAR GUARD ACTION.

10. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN HAS BEEN THAT THE SPD HAS BEEN SLOW IN GETTING STARTED. IT IS CLEAR THAT SCHMIDT UNDERESTIMATED KOHL AS AN OPPONENT. ONLY WHEN THE GAP BETWEEN THE ADVERSARIES NARROWED DID THE CHANCELLOR BEGIN TO TAKE THE CHALLENGE SERIOUSLY. THE CHANCELLOR HAD ALWAYS PLANNED TO BEGIN HIS FULL PARTICIPATION IN THE CAMPAIGN AT THE BEGINNING OF SEPTEMBER IN ORDER NOT TO PEAK TOO EARLY. OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CABINET WERE TO TAKE TURNS DURING THE MONTH OF AUGUST IN PUBLICIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE SOCIAL/LIBERAL GOVERNMENT OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS. HOWEVER, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MINISTER MATTHOEFER, THE SPD MINISTERS CHOSE TO GO OFF

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 05 BONN 16032

ON VACATION AND THEY LOST ONE OF THE KEY ADVANTAGES OF INCUMBENCY--THE ABILITY TO MAKE NEWS.

11. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS HAVE HAD CONSIDERABLE DIFFI-  
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CULTY IN COMING TO GRIPS WITH THE "FREIHEIT STATT SOZIALISMUS" SLOGAN. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC POLITICIANS HAVE SPENT MOST OF THE CAMPAIGN ON THE DEFENSIVE, TRYING TO PROVE THAT SOCIAL DEMOCRATS SUPPORT FREEDOM AS MUCH AS THE UNION PARTIES DO. BY USING UP THEIR TIME DEFENDING THEMSELVES, SPD POLITICIANS HAVE HAD LESS TIME TO STRESS THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE SOCIAL/LIBERAL COALITION.

12. THE CHANCELLOR, THOUGH SLOW TO GET STARTED, IS NOW WORKING HARD. HIS DISTASTE FOR CAMPAIGNING IS OBVIOUS. HE OFTEN CONVEYS THE IMPRESSION THAT HE WOULD RATHER BE AT HIS DESK THAN ON THE STUMP. BUT THIS ELECTION CLEARLY MEANS A GREAT DEAL TO HIM AND HE IS NOW FIGHTING HARD. HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO CONVEY SOME SENSE THAT OSTPOLITIK MAY YET HAVE A FUTURE BY THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE IMPENDING BREZHNEV VISIT AND BY THE GESTURES THAT THE GDR HAS RECENTLY MADE. WHEN HE CASTS STRAUSS IN THE ROLE OF THE DEVIL HE IS PURSUING A DEFENSIVE CAMPAIGN TACTIC, BUT IT IS NOT AN INEFFECTIVE ONE. MANY GERMANS, WHATEVER THEIR CONSERVATIVE LEANINGS, QUESTION WHETHER KOHL COULD REALLY SET THE MAIN LINES OF POLICY IF THE UNION PARTIES WERE TO COME TO POWER. THUS, IN A CURIOUS WAY, WHEREAS THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS IN 1972 WERE CAMPAIGNING ON TTQ HOPES OF THE GERMANS, THEY ARE NOW CAMPAIGNING ON THEIR FEARS.

13. THE POLARIZATION WHICH HAS TAKEN PLACE IN THE CAMPAIGN, ALTHOUGH LESS THAN IN 1972, HAS MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR FDP CHAIRMAN GENSCHER TO PRESENT THE LIBERAL ALTERNATIVE TO THE VOTERS. THE LIBERALS ARE AGAIN PLAGUED BY A SHORTAGE OF FUNDS AND ARE FORCED TO RUN THEIR CAMPAIGN ON A SHOESTRING. THE FDP CAMPAIGN IS CENTERED AROUND THE FOUR LIBERAL FEDERAL MINISTERS. THEY HAVE NOW BEGUN TO MAKE INROADS AMONG THE VOTERS ACCORDING TO RECENT PUBLIC OPINION POLLS. GENSCHER ATTENDS FIVE TO SIX RALLIES A DAY, OFTEN SPEAKING TO SMALL CROWDS. HIS AIDES ADMIT THAT THIS FRENETIC CAMPAIGNING IS NOT LIKELY TO GAIN THE LIBERALS VERY MANY VOTES, BUT HE IS UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM LOCAL PARTY ORGANIZATIONS TO MAKE PERSONAL APPEARANCES.

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14. GENSCHER HANDLED HIMSELF EXTREMELY WELL IN THE TELEVISION PROGRAM "VOTERS ASK-AND POLITICIANS ANSWER." UNLIKE STRAUSS OR SCHMIDT, GENSCHER REFUSED TO HAVE THE PROGRAM BROADCAST FROM A FACTORY. HE CHOSE AS THE BROADCAST SITE A HIGHSCHOOL GYMNASIUM IN A SMALL INDUSTRIAL TOWN OUTSIDE OF BONN. THE MIDDLE-CLASS AUDIENCE WAS MADE UP OF REPRESENTATIVES OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE RED CROSSE, VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS, AND OTHER SERVICE GROUPS. GENSCHER MADE EVERY EFFORT TO PROJECT AN IMAGE OF A REASONABLE, FRIENDLY AND FAIR POLITICIAN, AND HE SUCCEEDED.

15. THE CASUAL AND COMRADELY ASSOCIATION THAT EXISTED IN 1972 BETWEEN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND THE FREE DEMOCRATS IS ALSO, HOWEVER, A THING OF THE PAST. SPD CAMPAIGNERS ARE NO LONGER URGING THEIR VOTERS TO GIVE THE FDP THEIR SECOND BALLOT. MANY SOCIAL DEMOCRATS BELIEVE, RIGHTLY OR NOT, THAT THE FDP MAY BE IN COALITION WITH THE CDU/CSU BEFORE THE END OF THE LEGISLATURE THAT IS NOW BEING ELECTED. THEREFORE, GENSCHER IS COMPLETELY CORRECT WHEN HE STATES THAT THE FDP IS CAMPAIGNING ON ITS OWN.

16. THERE ARE NO LIMITS ON CAMPAIGN SPENDING IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC AND MAJOR PARTIES RECEIVE ALMOST FORTY MILLION DOLLARS IN DIRECT GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES. NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES HAVE SPENT A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF MONEY ON THE CAMPAIGN. THERE HAS BEEN A VIRTUAL AVALANCHE OF BROCHURES, PRESS STATEMENTS AND ELECTION GIMMICKS, INCLUDING T-SHIRTS, BIKINIS AND CIGARETTE LIGHTERS. ONLY THE LIBERALS, BECAUSE OF THEIR POOR FINANCIAL SITUATION, HAVE BEEN MODEST IN FLOODING THE MARKET WITH ELECTION MATERIAL.

17. THE TONE OF THE CAMPAIGN HAS SHARPENED SINCE THE BEGINNING AND THE STATEMENTS MADE BY THE MAJOR CANDIDATES ABOUT EACH OTHER HAVE BECOME CONTENTIOUS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE CDU IN ITS TV SPOTS ATTEMPTS TO LINK

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 04 OF 05 BONN 16032

SCHMIDT AND BRANDT WITH SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN COMMUNISM. THE SPD, INCLUDING SCHMIDT, BRANDT AND WEHNER, HAS BEEN PORTRAYING THE CDU AND CSU LEADERSHIP, PARTICULARLY STRAUSS, AS POLITICAL ARSONISTS AND TRIGGER-HAPPY POLITICIANS WHO COULD LEAD GERMANY INTO A CIVIL WAR.

18. THE UNDECIDED VOTERS STILL HOVER AROUND THE TEN  
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PER CENT MARK. ACCORDING TO THE LATEST ALLENSBACH POLL, THERE HAS BEEN A SLIGHT IMPROVEMENT IN THE COALITION'S FAVOR (SPD - 40.5, FDP - 10.5, CDU/CSU - 48) WHICH WOULD SEEM TO REPRESENT SOME MOVEMENT ON THE PART OF THE UNDECIDED. HOWEVER, THE MASS OF UNDECIDED VOTERS STILL HAS NOT SHIFTED IN EITHER DIRECTION, ACCORDING TO THE POLLS.

19. THE EMPHASIS ON FREEDOM AS A CAMPAIGN SLOGAN IN THE 1976 BUNDESTAG ELECTION IS AN INDICATION OF THE LINGERING POLITICAL INSECURITY IN WEST GERMANY. IT WOULD BE INCONCEIVABLE FOR A MAJOR AMERICAN OR ENGLISH POLITICIAN TO RUN ON A "FREEDOM" TICKET. IN SOME WAYS THE 1976 CAMPAIGN WITH ITS FREEDOM VS. SOCIALISM REPRESENTS MORE THE CAMPAIGNS OF THE EARLY YEARS OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC THAN THE MORE RECENT ELECTIONS. BUT THE DICTATORSHIP THAT THE CDU HOPES THE VOTERS WILL NOW OPPOSE IS NOT THAT OF A SINGLE TOTALITARIAN FIGURE; IT IS, RATHER, THE DICTATORSHIP OF AN INVISIBLE AND CREEPING BUREAUCRACY THAT CONTROLS THE PEOPLE WITH THE BEST OF INTENT FOR THEIR OWN SALVATION AND PHYSICAL WELL BEING. THE CDU/CSU HAS, THEREFORE, DRAWN CONSIDERABLE ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE DEFEAT OF THE PALME GOVERNMENT IN SWEDEN; THE CONSERVATIVES HERE BELIEVE THIS DEFEAT MIRRORS A GENERAL TREND AGAINST THE CONTINUED EXPANSION OF THE WELFARE SYSTEM.

20. AS THE CAMPAIGN HAS DEVELOPED, BOTH SIDES HAVE TRIED TO ADDRESS SOME KEY GROUPS:

--ONE KEY GROUP IS THAT OF OLDER VOTERS, OF WHICH THERE ARE NOW A POTENTIAL 11.5 MILLION (OVER 60 YEARS OF AGE). THE UNION PARTIES HAVE WARNED OF A POTENTIAL FINANCIAL DISASTER LOOMING AHEAD FOR GERMAN PENSION FUNDS. THE SPD HAS STRESSED ITS ACHIEVEMENTS IN GAINING SOCIAL BENEFITS FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND HAS TRIED TO CALM CDU-INSPIRED FEARS.

--ANOTHER KEY GROUP IS THAT OF THE YOUNG. THERE WILL BE, IT IS ESTIMATED, ABOUT 3.3 MILLION GERMANS WHO WILL BE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE

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UPCOMING ELECTION. POLLS INDICATE THAT MORE OF THE NEW VOTERS THAN IN 1972 LEAN TO THE CONSERVATIVE SIDE,

BUT IT IS UNCERTAIN HOW MANY WILL VOTE SINCE THIS  
IS TRADITIONALLY A GROUP WITH A LOWER VOTING PERCENTAGE  
THAN OTHERS.

--ANOTHER SUCH GROUP IS THAT OF WOMEN, PARTICULARLY IN THE SENIOR AGE BRACKETS. MOST POLITICAL  
SCIENTISTS FEEL THAT IT WAS THE WOMEN'S VOTE THAT  
ACCOUNTED FOR BRANDT'S VICTORY IN 1972. THIS YEAR,  
AT LEAST ON THE SURFACE, KOHL APPEARS TO BE MOST  
SUCCESSFUL IN DRAWING THE SUPPORT OF WOMEN VOTERS, BUT  
THE SPD HOPES THAT ITS MORE LIBERAL STAND ON ABORTION  
REFORM WILL COMPENSATE FOR KOHL'S PERSONAL POPULARITY.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 05 OF 05 BONN 16032

--LAST BUT NOT LEAST, THE GERMAN WORKER HAS  
BEEN A TARGET IN THIS CAMPAIGN MORE THAN IN THE RECENT  
PAST. BIEDENKOPF'S CHALLENGE TO THE DGB HAS BEEN  
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INTENDED TO AROUSE THE INDEPENDENT WORKERS. THE CDU  
HOPES THAT THE GROWING PERCENTAGE OF GERMAN LABOR  
MOVING FROM THE ASSEMBLY LINE AND THE MINES INTO  
SMALLER AND HIGHER PAYING JOBS WILL MEAN THAT THEY  
CAN BEGIN TO MAKE GENUINE INROADS INTO THE LABOR VOTE.  
BUT IT IS STILL IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL WHETHER BIEDENKOPF,  
BY STIRRING UP A DORMANT ISSUE, MAY NOT HAVE MOBILIZED  
MORE HOSTILE WORKER VOTES THAN FRIENDLY ONES.

21. AS WE HAVE REPEATED FOR THE PAST YEAR,  
THE ELECTION APPEARS TO BE SO CLOSE THAT IT WILL BE  
IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANYBODY RESPONSIBLY TO PREDICT THE  
OUTCOME. THE SPD IS CLEARLY ON THE DEFENSIVE AND WILL  
LOSE SOME VOTES AGAINST ITS 1972 TOTAL. THE UNION  
PARTIES WILL GAIN SOME OF THESE VOTES, AS WILL THE FREE  
DEMOCRATS. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE SHIFTS  
WILL BE LARGE ENOUGH TO BRING ABOUT A CHANGE OF GOVERN-  
MENT HERE.  
HILLENBRAND

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**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 BONN 15643, 76 BONN 15238, 76 BONN 14675  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** ElyME  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 01 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <01 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <13 AUG 2004 by ElyME>  
**Review Markings:**

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Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** 1976 BUNDESTAG ELECTION: TEN DAYS TO GO  
**TAGS:** PINT, GE  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006